

Message Text

SECRET

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ACTION SS-25

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FM AMEMBASSY MANAGUA
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S E C R E T MANAGUA 3644

EXDIS

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PFOR, OVIP, NU
SUBJECT: PRESIDENT SOMOZA'S UNOFFICIAL VISITS TO THE UNITED STATES

REF: MANAGUA 3490

1. AS THE DEPARTMENT IS AWARE, PRESIDENT SOMOZA UNDERTAKES FREQUENT UNOFFICIAL VISITS TO THE UNITED STATES. IT IS OUR UNDERSTANDING THAT HE VISITS FRIENDS, MEMBERS OF HIS FAMILY U.E.G. HIS SON JULIO AND HIS MOTHER), CONTACTS U.S. POLITICAL LEADERS (E.G., MAYORS, CONGRESSMEN, AND GOVERNORS), MEETS WITH U.S. BUSINESS LEADERS, AND PURSUES HIS PRIVATE BUSINESS INTERESTS.

2. HOWEVER, THE EMBASSY, AND INDEED THE DEPARTMENT, IS ONLY PARTIALLY INFORMED ABOUT HIS TRIP ITINERARY, HIS POLITICAL AND ECONOMIC CONTACTS, AND THE SCOPE OF HIS BUSINESS INTERESTS IN THE UNITED STATES. IT SERVES OUR INTEREST TO KNOW MORE ABOUT THE PURPOSE OF HIS TRIPS, PERSONS WITH WHOM HE MEETS, AND ANY MEDICAL ATTENTION HE RECEIVES. EVEN WHEN U.S. SECRET SERVICE PROTECTION IS PROVIDED, THE EMBASSY RECEIVED NO INTELLIGENCE ABOUT SOMOZA'S ACTIVITIES IN THE UNITED STATES.

3. THE STATE OF SOMOZA'S HEALTH IS A MUCH DEBATED TOPIC IN NICARAGUDBGN WITH RUMORS CIRCULATING TO THE EFFECT THAT HIS HEALTH IS POOR, AND THAT HE GOES TO THE UNITED STATES FOR MEDICAL TREATMENT FOR UNSPECIFIED AILMENTS. HOWEVER, THERE IS LITTLE CONCRETE INFORMATION AVAILABLE ABOUT HIS HEALTH. THE AMBASSADOR HAS NOTED IN REFTEL THAT THE PRESIDENT HAS COMPLAINED ABOUT SOME ILL-DEFINED MED-

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ICAL PROBLEM, SUGGESTING THAT IT WAS OF A GASTRO-INTESTINAL NAT-

URE. HE APPEARS TO HAVE SHARPLY REDUCED HIS ALCOHOL INTAKE OVER THE PAST SIX MONTHS OR SO, AND HAS LOST SOME WEIGHT.

4. AN ACCURATE APPRAISAL OF SOMOZA'S HEALTH IS OF CONSIDERABLE IMPORTANCE FOR OUR POLITICAL FORECASTING, AND THE EMBASSY WILL CONTINUE ITS EFFORTS TO BECOME BETTER INFORMED ON THIS MATTER. BUT IT WOULD ALSO BE HELPFUL IF THE DEPARTMENT WERE ABLE TO ENSURE A CLOSE MONITORING OF SOMOZA'S U.S. VISITS IN ORDER TO VERIFY MEDICAL TREATMENT AND DEVELOPMENT OTHER INTELLIGENCE. EMBASSY IS ALSO INTERESTED IN RECEIVING RELEVANT INFORMATION FROM SECRET SERVICE REPORTS.

5. WE FIND IT RATHER SURPRISING THAT A FOREIGN CHIEF OF STATE, EVEN A FRIENDLY ONE, IS ABLE TO MOVE AROUND THE UNITED STATES WITHOUT THE USG BEING FULLY AWARE OF HIS WHEREABOUTS AND ACTIVITIES.
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